

Eagle Scout creates map of old, unregistered graves

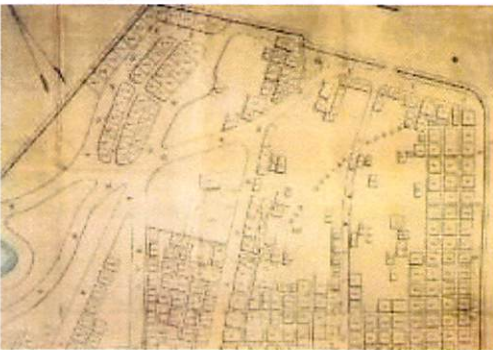
By Jillian Harrington
Clipper Intern

In order to obtain the Eagle Scout rank, Duxbury High School junior Derek DiVirgilio did something unique: he worked with the Mayflower Cemetery to register over 100 previously unregistered graves.

"Most people who get their Eagle Scout [rank] build a bench for a park or help a church out," said DiVirgilio. "This was different." DiVirgilio joined Cub Scouts when he was in elementary school, mostly because all his friends were doing it. However, when most of his friends eventually quit scouting, DiVirgilio enjoyed it so much that he stuck with it, passing through Cub Scouts to Boy Scouts.

For about a month now, DiVirgilio has been an Eagle Scout, the highest rank in the Boy Scouts program. To reach this, one must accept the oath and have a required set of merit badges, such as First Aid and Emergency Preparedness. One must also complete an Eagle Scout project.

DiVirgilio received the idea for registering graves after calling various town officials when he began his project. Originally, the cemetery suggested he do only a fraction of the project he ended up with.



Derek DiVirgilio found all the unmarked graves, marked them, discovered their owners and connected them to cards at the Mayflower Cemetery office.

money from the quality of the gravestone or amount of people buried under one stone. Some graves were easy to read, but others were so old he had to pour water on top to reveal the original colors and the names.

Many gravestones were memorials, meaning that people were not even buried in that spot. Yet, DiVirgilio registered these as well. This was the case often in the older area of the cemetery. Surprisingly, some graves as recent as the 1960s were also found among older graves.

DiVirgilio started last year and worked on the project for several months. He worked closely with many people from the town, including the town historian and Mayflower Cemetery officials.



Eagle Scout Derek DiVirgilio (center) with Dave Winters and George Williams. DiVirgilio mapped out over 100 unmarked graves in the Mayflower Cemetery for his Eagle Scout project.

"They said, 'No, no, it's too much work. Don't do it all, break it up into one section,'" said DiVirgilio. "I told them, 'If I'm going to do one section, I'm going to do it all.'"

Until the mid-20th century, many graves in the cemetery went unmarked. It was DiVirgilio's task to find these graves, mark them, figure out who they belonged to and connect them to the cards inside the Mayflower Cemetery office. In the end, the Eagle Scout found over 100 graves spanning the 17th to 20th centuries. He completed a full layout of the cemetery with a CAD program, thanks to the help of a local surveying firm, Merrill Engineers and Land Surveyors.

DiVirgilio learned several things during his project. For example, he was able to tell which families had more

His commitment to the project and town was evident, and meeting all the requirements, he became an Eagle Scout.

Though Eagle Scout is the highest rank, DiVirgilio can still strive to win awards and work on special service projects.

As for the future, DiVirgilio said, “I plan on continuing in Boy Scouts until I’m 18, helping other scouts, helping them rank up and helping to plan trips.”



With the help of a local surveying company, DiVirgilio created a new map of unmarked graves.